

## Election of 1824

By Cathy Pearl

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It was 1824. It was time for Americans to elect a new president to lead the country. There were four men running for president. Each of them had support from different parts of the country.

John Quincy Adams was liked in New England. He was the son of John Adams. John Adams was the second president of the United States. Adams had been Secretary of State. He also helped to end the War of 1812. People thought that he was very smart. Adams had trouble before the election. He did not like to be among people. To most people he seemed like a hard, cold man.

Henry Clay was liked in the west. He was a very smart politician. Clay was a member of Congress. People knew him as a person who was good at working out problems. He worked out several issues that helped keep the country from splitting apart. He did many good things.

Andrew Jackson was more popular in the west. Most people knew who he was. He had won important battles during the War of 1812. He was called "Old Hickory." This was because a soldier had said that he was as strong as hickory. Jackson owned land and slaves. People who were poor liked him anyway. Jackson had been born in a log cabin. His parents were poor farmers.

The fourth person running for president was William Crawford. People living in the south liked him. A year before the election, Crawford had a stroke. This weakened him during the time when he should have been campaigning.

None of the men who ran for president was declared a winner after the election was over. Jackson won most of the popular votes. He did not have a majority or more than fifty percent of the electoral votes. This meant that the House of Representatives would get to choose the president. They could only pick from the top three candidates.

Henry Clay had finished fourth. He could not become president. But he was Speaker of the House. He would have a say in who would become the next president.

Clay told other people in the House of Representatives that they should vote for Adams. They listened and Adams was made the president. After Adams took office, he made Henry Clay his Secretary of State.

People who liked Andrew Jackson were very upset. They said that Clay and Adams had made an unfair deal. The deal was called a "corrupt bargain." They said that Jackson should have been made president.

Jackson had won the popular vote. This meant that more people voted for him than anyone else. But there were problems with this, too. Most states did not have all four men running for president on the ballot. Some states did not have three of them. People who voted for Jackson may not have had as many choices as people in other states did.

Did Clay and Adams make a deal? There was never any evidence that this was true. There were rumors that Clay had agreed to vote for Adams or Jackson if one of them made him Secretary of State. Clay said this was not true.

In the end, there was nothing that anyone could do. The election had been decided just like the Constitution said that it should be. This didn't help Adams. Many people were angry about what had happened. The country would be very hard to bring together.

Adams was not a popular president. He would try to do things to help the country during his four years in office. But many people were afraid to spend money on the things that he wanted to do. They turned down many of his



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The election of 1824 divided the country. But it also showed the power of the Constitution. The country followed what was stated in it when the election was decided. The strength the document had, many years after it was written, was clearly shown.

Adams would only be president for four years. People who liked Andrew Jackson would get their revenge in 1828. That year, Andrew Jackson was elected as the next president.

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## Questions

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\_\_\_\_\_ 1. New England wanted which person to become the next president?

- A. Henry Clay
- B. Andrew Jackson
- C. John Quincy Adams

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Who received the most votes in the election?

- A. Andrew Jackson
- B. Henry Clay
- C. William Crawford

3. If Andrew Jackson received the most popular votes, why wasn't he named the president?

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\_\_\_\_\_ 4. How many men ran for president in 1824?

- A. Four
- B. Five
- C. Three

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Who decided the election?

- A. The Senate
- B. The House of Representatives
- C. The president

6. What was the deal between Adams and Clay called?

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